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ABSTRACT

College is a place for students who really want to earn an education--that is, for students willing to move toward academic excellence and to excell. Lowering standards for any ethnic group dooms that group to the "junk heap of no success." Today, at great cost to the nation, America keeps too many students who are not university material in the university. The public bears 67 percent of the cost of instruction for the 10 percent of students who should not be matriculating. This amounts to a massive taxpayer subsidization of such students. While institutions of higher learning should be relatively flexible in their admission policies, they should also provide a vigorous remediation program and demand high levels of academic performance in all classes. Today's educators must say no to academic permissiveness; they must not graduate inferior students who cannot compete. "Late bloomers" may need more than 4 years to complete their college work. This, however, is a small price to pay for a lifetime of competency. In addition to removing students who do not belong at college or university, administrators must see that education becomes more cost effective and efficient. To be efficient, managers must streamline operations and be willing to delegate responsibility and/or to fire personnel if necessary. (RH)

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COLLEGE IS NOT FOR EVERYONE

Statement by

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at the

NATIONAL FORUM ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

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I wish to thank the Department of Education for this opportunity to share some thoughts with you on the question of whether we are overeducating our students by admitting too many ill prepared students to our colleges and universities? The response is an emphatic NO. We are undereducating students by admitting to many unprepared students to our colleges and universities.

It is my strong opinion that college is not for everyone. College is for students who really want to earn an education. The individual who is not serious about earning a college degree should not be able to matriculate at a public institution of higher learning because these public colleges and universities are highly subsidized by taxpayer's funds.

To really earn an education means the following:
The student is willing to move toward academic excellence and has a will to excell. Moreover, the student knows that an education will not come easily--it must be earned. The days of giving away degrees are coming to an end The mood in America, today, and particularly in the present Administration is that with effort and determination students will achieve and without it students will not. Moreover, the evidence is strong today that hard work, discipline, and study can produce results and successes. In addition, the students must not be afraid of high academic standards but of the lowering of standards.

Lowering of standards for any ethnic group will only doom that group to the junk heap of no success. Future employers will not tolerate lower standards, so why should students. High academic standards will make the student the thinker and builder of tomorrow. The student must know also that if he is

being coddled academically, he is being mentally crippled--the best way a professor can help a student is to teach him to write and to compute--and/or to fail him if the student deserves to be failed.

America owes no person the right to attend a four year public university. It should only encourage those students who really want to earn a degree in higher education. Educators should have the integrity to bar any student, regardless of ethnic origin, who shows no possibility of academic success whatsoever, from the university environment. Of course, any student given remediation help and showing a strong desire and some capacity to achieve is worth gambling on. However, if vigorous programs of remediation, designed to provide the tools and skills the student had not gained in earlier schooling do not permit the student to do college work. he should be expelled from the institution. Any educational institution that does otherwise is not a friend of the students--it is a "cheater" of them.

It is my frank opinion that we are, today, keeping too many students in universities who are not university material and at a great cost to the Nation.

For example, it is often stated that on an average 10 percent of the students matriculating at Public Category C institutions (those granting bachelors, masters, and Doctoral degrees), 20 percent enrolled at category B Non-private colleges and universities (those giving no higher than master's degrees), and 20 percent of the students at Category A institutions (those public four year baccalaureate degree granting and two year associate degree granting comprehensive community colleges with transfer academic programs) are not college material. If these percentages are correct, then for example at the Category B institution with 10,000 students, 2,000 of the enrolled students should not be matriculating at the university. Moreover, it is known at these institutions that students pay about 33 percent of the

cost of their instruction. This means that 67 percent of the cost for instruction is born by the taxpayers. If the tuition cost per student is $1,000, then the real cost to the student and the taxpayers is $3,000. Therefore the cost is subsidized by the taxpayers by the amount of $2,000. Then $2,000 times the 2,000 students would be a subsidization of $4,000,000 for the 2,000 students who are not college material at just one institution. When all the categories of institutions (A, B C) are taken into account in any state - there is massive subsidization of non college material students by taxpayers.

How do educators or institutions identify these students who should not be enrolled in public institutions of higher learning--and what should they do about this situation?

To begin with--instituions of higher learning should be relatively flexible in their admission's policies. Any students who show strong desire, a willingness to learn and some capacity should be permitted to enroll at the institution. The school should not be greatly concerned with where the student is when he enrolls. That is not the college's responsibility; moveover, in large measure it is generally not the student's fault. The institution's concern should be is he capable of earning a degree. To that end, the college or university should be committed to two very important things:

- o a vigorous program of remediation, designed to provide the tools and skills the student had not gained in earlier schooling
- o and in all classes demanding academic performance

Today's educators must say no to the system of academic permissiveness that has poisoned our educational system and educators in the past. Institutions must not graduate students who are inferior in their

knowledge and their capacity to compete. They should not permit students to develop only half of their natural talents. All graduates must have earned the degree--not have it given to them.

Granted some students are "late bloomers" and may require more than four year to complete their college work. However, an extra year or two, for any reason, is a small price to pay for a lifetime of competency. Institutions must be determined to provide no less than that for their graduates--so they can stand with pride and use their education to become better, happier, more successful men and women. But more importantly, having confidence in their education, the graduates will be prepared to be strident against the ills of the world--so strident that with their education, they will go forth and create a better world.

Will such policies work in higher education? Of course, if the institutions insist upon student performance and put on probation, and then expel those students not making progress. Earning an education is not fun. Education is a serious business demanding a serious response from both student and the university. Just as the student must accept the responsibility for extending himself academically, so the higher learning institutions must accept their responsibility to make the resources that will help him discover his aspirations, needs and skills in addition to aiding him to explore various alternatives.

The purpose of education is to attempt to bring out the best of each each individual. Education should be used to teach people to know themselves and their capabilities and how to perform at the top of their capabilities.

This cannot be done by coddling students or by passing them when they should be held back.

It should be an indictable crime to graduate students from universities who cannot read, write or compute.

And, we all know, that great numbers of students have been graduated without those skills because someone underestimated their ability or told them they could not do it or--worse yet--the teachers were not competent to teach them.

Putting excellence back into our education system, from bottom to top, is not an impossible task. The responsibility must be shared by administrators, teachers, students, colleges of education, boards of education, legislatures other policymakers, parents, and the comunity at large. But in the end, it must happen in the classroom.

First educators must dispel the notion at every level of education and at every level of educational decision-making that some students can be helped by special treatment...treatment that mainly consists of excusing poor performance and overlooking poor behavior, and treatment that in the end is ruinous to the student and detrimental to society.

I do not know how long America can stand this erosion of education. If we are to survive as a great nation we better do something about it immediately. It is time we became angry about the current status of education in America or we should ask the Good Lord's forgiveness for our inaction. Some educators say that with more money the job of improving education can be accomplished. Whether that is true or not, the facts are that there will be very little additional money for education in the immediate future. In FY 83 the federal government spent about six billion dollars on financial assistance programs in colleges and universities; approximately 2.3 billion of the six billion alone was spent on guaranteed student loan programs. If one takes into account inflation since 1981, the total amount that should have been spent is around seven billion. Therefore, there will probably be fewer guaranteed student loans available in the upcoming fiscal year and other educational cuts will also be projected for the future.

Institutions must move quickly on the problem of students who do not belong in our institutions of higher learning. They must also take the necessary action required to utilize other means of making the taxpayers support (monies) for higher education more cost effective and efficient. Managing their institutions better and doing more with less money is the way of the future. The challenge for the institutions surely includes better administration.

More effective Administration means doing our jobs effectively with less resource allocations. There is an old statement that where resources are plentiful, people tend to unconsciously waste those resources because there is no need to consider more efficient ways of getting the job done.

Today, because times have been too good in the past, in most colleges and universities, we are inefficent in both small and large matters, particularly in how we manage our institutions. Why is it so often the case that we have more than one person or office needlessly performing the same job? We do not talk to one another and too often we do not know what our staffs are doing. Once recognized, duplication of effort should be eradicated. We will not be permitted such luxury of waste today.

We are inefficient when we overwork one office and let another office live in 'semi-retirement.' We are inefficient when we let one academic department carry an inordinately larger load than several other departments. We may be effective. We may get the job done. But we are wasting people and their time and the taxpayers money.

And these inefficiencies don't just happen. We let them happen. We watch them happen, and we do it because we want to be effective not efficient. We give office A the job office B should be doing because we know A is more likely to get the job done than office B. In such a case, we are effective in delivering service, but ineffective and inefficient as managers of managers. You have

heard of the Peter Principle. Well, some of us are probably co-conspirators in providing good examples of that principle. Promotion of staff should render the operation more efficent. Promotion to remove a problem is destined to make the operation more inefficient and costly in the long run.

We are inefficient when we become bogged down in the details of our office work, details that could easily be delegated to another employee. To delegate means we have to take a risk that someone can do the job as well if not better than we, or the risk that the job will not be done as well and we will have to invest some time in better training or supervision. In either case we should spend more time managing than being a clerk or pushing paper.

To be efficient, we must streamline our operation. We must insist on everyone carrying their own weight. We must be willing to delegate and/or to fire personnel if necessary.

Whether it be educational survival by coping with fewer resources or serving the correct student clientel--survive we must.